

## **KENTUCKY IMPLEMENTS A NEW FOOD SAFETY TASK FORCE**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 7, 2001)** -- The Cabinet for Health Services-Department for Public Health has recently initiated a new Food Safety Task Force to identify and address Kentucky's priority food safety issues.

Created two years ago by Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Billy Ray Smith, the task force was recently transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Cabinet for Health Services, the offices where food safety inspections are conducted. This new task force comprises representatives of the federal Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, state officials from the Departments for Public Health, Agriculture, Education, Parks, Corrections, local health departments, the food service industry, Kentucky Restaurant and Grocers Associations, and university representatives.

"This unique group brings together at one table many of the representatives who have a role in the safety of Kentucky's food," said Guy Delius, manager of the Food Safety Branch in the Cabinet for Health Services, who chairs the task force. "It's only natural that we communicate and collaborate together regarding many of the issues facing Kentucky's food supply."

Delius said the purpose of the task force is to bring these representatives together to help Kentucky further assure the safety of foods grown, distributed, manufactured and prepared for service here.

"This Commonwealth and the U.S. have one of the safest food supplies found anywhere in the world, but we are constantly being challenged by new problems, organisms and situations which can effect the safety of our food supplies," Delius said.

"Our primary role is to see that Kentucky's retail food industry does a booming business while making sure our citizens receive only the safest foods possible," said Dr. Rice C. Leach, commissioner for the Department for Public Health. "I am pleased to see our public health, agriculture and food service industry coming together to continue their good work in the era of global food supplies."

This task force will be working on issues such as:

- Developing food safety education materials for the growing senior population and for children.
- Developing better ways to train food service workers and managers of restaurants to make sure they handle our foods safely.
- Expanding the concept of providing food safety training to high school students in school curriculums.
- Streamlining the reporting of food borne illness to ensure prompt and accurate reporting mechanisms.
- Updating Kentucky's Food Safety Regulations to bring them in line with current federal recommendations.

- Developing and distributing information regarding the nutritional aspects of our diets and recommend healthy alternatives.

If you have any questions or comments for the Food Safety Task Force, call Guy Delius with the food safety branch at (502) 564-7181.